approval of the then Vice President, CSIR he took over charge at the National Chemical Laboratory (NCL), Pune for preparing the detailed project report for establishing a single focal point in the CSIR for coordinating the dispersed and distributed information technology activities in CSIR and synergising resource endowments and competence externally.

(b) He is there on deputation since then.

**Scientists and Technical Staff in CSIR**

1546. SHRI GAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of scientists (group-IV) and technical staff (group-III) of each Laboratory/Institute of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), including the headquarters of CSIR as on October, 1998;

(b) the number of those, out of the above, belonging to Scheduled Castes, Laboratory/institute-wise separately; and

(c) the total number of scientists (group-IV) recruited and the total number of scientists recruited from SC/ST categories at the headquarters of CSIR for the period 1988-89 to 1997-98, yearwise?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

**NGRI Scientists Prediction of Earthquake**

1547. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the forecast made by a senior scientist at the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) that a major earthquake was likely to rock the Sone-Narmada-Tapti basin in Central India;

(b) if so, the Government's reaction thereto and whether Government would consider insuring the life and property of people of the concerned area against earthquake; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) The newspaper item is purported to be by a superannuated Scientist of National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) a constituent unit of CSIR, in his personal capacity and is not based on any study by NGRI on the subject. However, a report on the subject is being sought with a view to deciding about further action in the matter.

**भारतीय औषधीय पौधों को पेटेन्ट करने की साजिश**

1548. श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक:
प्रो॰ रामगोपाल यादव:

क्या विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि विदेशों में भारतीय औषधीय पौधों को पेटेन्ट करने के लिए साजिश की जा रही है; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो सरकार इस साजिश को विफल करने के लिए तथा इनकी सुरक्षा के लिए कानून बनाने के लिए क्या कदम उठाएगी?

मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री तथा विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्री (डॉ॰ मुरली मनोहर जोशी): (क) और (ख) सरकार को इस प्रकार की साजिश की कोई जानकारी/सूचना नहीं है। तथापि, सरकार देश के औषधीय पादप सम्पदा के संरक्षण के बारे में बहुत ही चिन्तित है। जंगली प्रजातियों के संरक्षण के लिए जैवविविधता अधिनियम तथा किसानों के अधिकार से जुड़े संवर्धित किस्मों के संरक्षण-सम्बन्धी कानून के प्रारूपों पर सरकार गहन विचार कर रही है। इसके